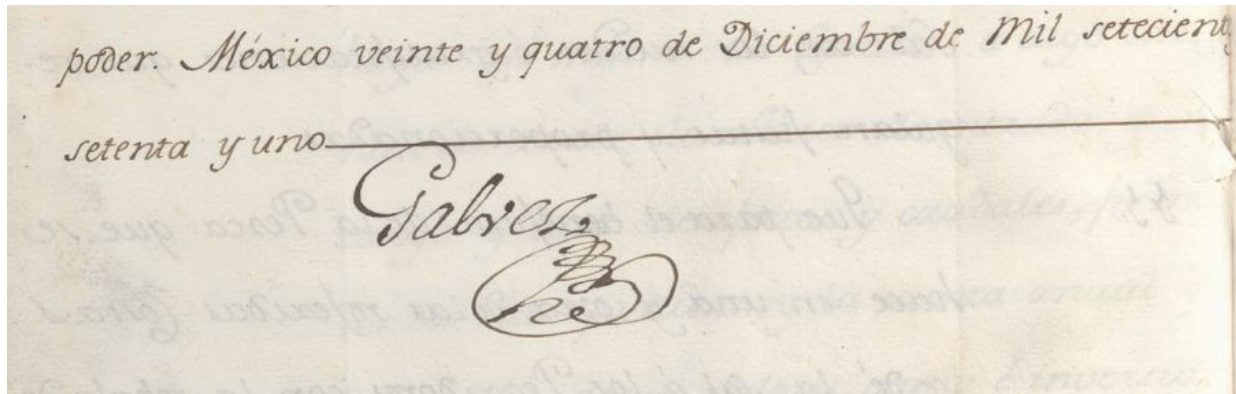


Bureaucracy on the Ground in Colonial Mexico: A Window into the *Visita* of 1765

A close-up photograph of a handwritten document. The text is written in cursive script on aged, slightly yellowed paper. The visible text reads "poder. México veinte y quatro de Diciembre de Mil setecientos setenta y uno" followed by a horizontal line and a large, ornate signature that appears to be "Gálvez".

Signature of José de Gálvez, *Visitador General* of New Spain 1765-1771 from Document G206-15

Description

This exhibition explores the localized consequences of the royal inspection, or *visita general*, administered by José de Gálvez in New Spain from 1765-1771. In an empire as vast and diverse as Spain's, *visitas* were valuable tools. On the one hand, they helped reinforce the authority of the king through detailed investigations of community life. At the same time, they demonstrated the king's vested interest in local justice and the common good. The procedure that the Inspector, or *Visitador*, followed was lengthy and complex. During his tenure, he investigated the functioning of political, economic, social, and even ecclesiastical institutions. Upon the completion of the *visita*, it was the responsibility of Gálvez to turn his notes, correspondence, and recommendations into a comprehensible summary report for the king. This exhibition provides an introduction to that process through an analysis of more than 30 documents from the [Genaro Garcia Collection](#).

Date Range(s): 1765-1772

Country(ies): Mexico;

Course Subject(s): Latin American Studies; Religious Studies; World Geography Studies; World History Studies

Topic(s): Catholic Church; Colonial Administration; Tobacco; Playing Cards; Mining Industry; Royal Inspections

Document Type(s): Manuscripts; Correspondence; Tables; Printed Materials
Language(s): Spanish

Rights Statement

Creator(s): Brittany Erwin, *Doctoral Candidate & LLILAS Benson Digital Scholarship Fellow (2020)*, Department of History

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Introduction

Between 1765 and 1771, New Spain--roughly equivalent to modern-day Mexico--experienced a major administrative overhaul. The name for this procedure was a *visita general*, or general inspection. The monarch had ordered the *visita*, but the real project leader was José de Gálvez, the *Visitador*, or inspector. He had been carefully selected by the king for this task. Although he supplied Gálvez with instructions, the monarch remained at his court in Madrid.

For seven years, Gálvez would act as the royal representative in New Spain, investigating local conditions and introducing changes. At every step, he left behind documents that recorded his thoughts and suggestions. Towards the end of his *visita*, he created and asked other officials to create reports and summaries that he could submit to the monarch upon his return to Spain. The political, economic, social, and religious transformation of New Spain during this period became a model that other parts of the empire followed. **Bureaucracy on the Ground in Colonial Mexico** explores those sources and retraces the steps of the *Visitador*.



[Interactive timeline](#) of Gálvez's *visita*, 1765-1771.

The documents that appear in this exhibition come from the extensive Genaro García Manuscript Collection. Its contents provide a range of perspectives on the history of Mexico, from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries. Transcriptions from these documents reveal the economic focus of the *Visitador*.



A word cloud created with Voyant Tools demonstrates the high frequency of money-related terms. See <https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=9483630b356bb512c0a71d03cc883b58&panels=cirrus,reader,trends,phrases,contexts&lang=en>

Gálvez's *visita* ultimately increased productivity and helped to tighten royal control in the region. The monarch was so pleased with this result that he promoted the former *visiador* and allowed him to supervise subsequent *visitas*, aiming to replicate the New Spain model throughout the empire.

These years of change became known as the Bourbon Reform period, named for the French lineage of the monarchs in power in Spain at that time. Gálvez's *visita*, and his later contributions as imperial *visita* supervisor, made him a key player. His suggestions for administrative redesign did help increase the productivity of the American colonies for the Crown. However, they also intensified social and political tensions between the Spanish ruling class and American-born colonists. Such conflicts continued festering for decades, playing a significant role in the independence movements of the early-nineteenth century.

The *Visita* Begins

After the monarch named him *Visitador* in 1765, Gálvez set off on the long journey from Spain to Mexico. Upon arrival, he had many tasks that pulled him in multiple directions. To help the *Visitador* fulfill all of these responsibilities, the monarch had supplied Gálvez with a small team of scribes, accountants, and assistants. Together, they tackled a variety of issues, from major institutional reform to localized rule changes.



Neither Gálvez nor any of his assistants prioritized map-making during the *visita*. However, other cartographers and illustrators did document the city during this historical period. This map of the city of Veracruz from 1821 comes from the Genaro Garcia: Imprints and Images Collection. It is available here: <https://collections.lib.utexas.edu/catalog/utblac:5d8b24f1-1df6-4101-8197-ff7ca4934e93>

For example, on February 11, 1767, the *Visitador* published a lengthy book of regulations specifically catered to the city of Veracruz. This document was comprehensive. It addressed taxes, shipping procedures, and notarial practices in a high level of detail. The image featured below comes from the end of the rulebook, when Gálvez assigned salaries to individual officials.

2º
 asignarwe al S.^{or} Gov.^{or} }
 un mil p.^{os} anuales, y }
 al Asesor quinientos }

Por la maior ocupacion, y fatiga que
 este Encargo ha de acrecer al Govi^{er}no se
 daran anualm.^{te} mil pesos de honorario
 y ayuda de costa al S.^{or} Gov.^{or} actual pa-
 gados del fondo de todas las Rentas y
 Ramos sujetos a esta Administrac.^{on} q.
 respecto de que anteriorm.^{te} se satisfac-
 -ian quinientos pesos por la sola conveni-
 -vencia de Alcabalas; y al Asesor
 se le pagaran igualmente los quinientos
 pesos que el Ex.^{mo} S.^{or} Virrey le ha
 señalado en su titulo por esta razon.

A later section of Gálvez's rulebook for the city of Veracruz assigned an annual salary of 1000 pesos to the governor and 500 pesos to the assessor. See Document G206-32.

As a major port city, Veracruz was a crucial concern for the Spanish Crown. Gálvez had the responsibility of ensuring that commerce and shipping functioned efficiently in order to secure profitability. However, the *Visitador* understood that for a city's industries to run properly, the rest of the government needed to be in top shape, too. Supervising salary assignments was one aspect of that plan. To fulfill their duties of securing order, justice, and production, city officials needed adequate pay.

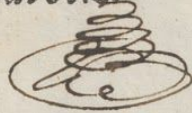
pendio de los Summarios, y Bullas, y en la recaudacion de la limosna asignada por ellas, se le ha de abonar un cinco por ciento sobre la cantidad total de las expendidas en sus Feligreses, admitiendole en parte de pago las que existan al fin de cada Predicacion; pero el valor, de las que se despacharen al principio, y en el transcurso de cada una se deberá poner en la Tesoreria de esa Provincia de seis en seis meses.

Si por algun motivo no pudiese Vmd. aceptar este encargo que le hago à nombre de su Magestad, del Exmó. Sr. Virrey, y mio, en que hará un particular merito que su Excà. y Yo recomendaremos siempre, se servirá avisarlo inmediatamente al Teforero, ó Ministros comissionados por cuya mano se dirigiere este oficio mio, á fin de que se pueda buscar, y elegir Sugeto en essa Feligresia que expendan los Summarios, y Bullas de cuenta de la Real Hazienda.

Nuestro Señor guarde à Vmd. muchos años.
Mexico, y Diciembre 8 — de 1767.

B. L. M. de Vmd.
su mas seguro Servidor,

Joseph de Galvez



Gálvez sometimes utilized the printing press to facilitate distribution of orders to local governments. This image provides one example of a printed order about the *limosna*, or alms collection. See Document G206-26

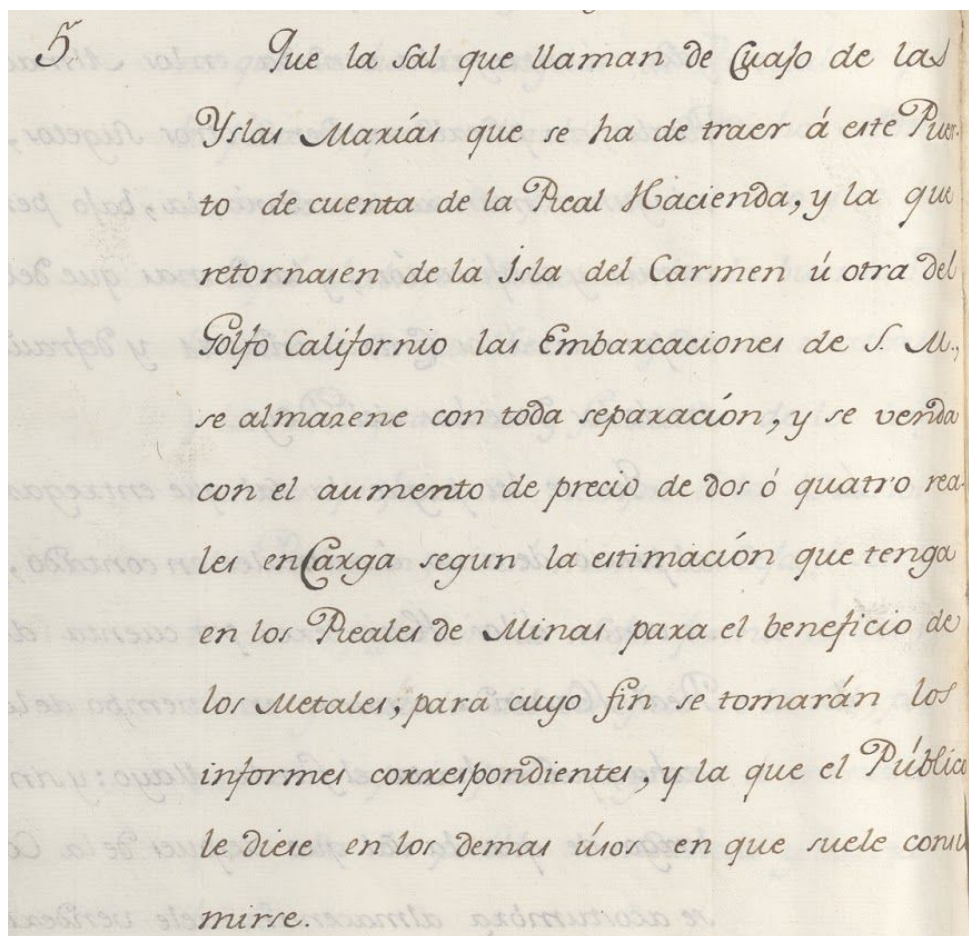
By the end of the year, Gálvez was working on another issue: church taxes. The monarch had a responsibility to ensure that churches were converting local people and maintaining Catholic values. As the king's representative in New Spain, Gálvez took on that duty.

An important part of this larger mission was monitoring the

churches' alms collection. On December 8, he signed an order about the exact amounts that churches had to collect and submit to the royal treasury.

Industry Inspection and Redesign

Over the next few years, Gálvez continued his comprehensive inspection by implementing new rules for industry. Since the Spaniards' arrival to the Americas in the early-sixteenth century, the region had provided many sources of income for the Spanish Crown. For example, coastal locations brought in salt, which supported local communities. Every sale operated under a royal tax, which helped bring in revenue for the monarchy. Gálvez also set up several monopolies that would operate under direct royal supervision. One such industry was the production of playing cards.



In rule number 5, Gálvez described how the salt from the Maria Islands should be stored and sold, Document G206-15

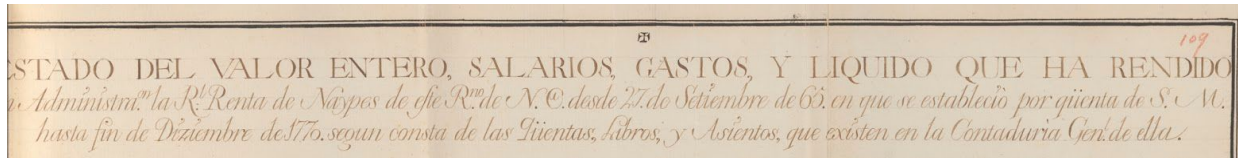
In May of 1768, the *Visitador* issued a series of rules for salt production in the following cities: Zapotillo, Sentipac, and "other areas in the department of San Blas." In the featured section of the new regulations, Gálvez provided specific notes for the salt coming from the Maria Islands. It would sell for a higher price than salt from other locations, and as a result, it needed separate storage at the port.

Partidos encabezados y á los Arrendadores: en la inteligencia de que todos estos, ademas de las cantidades estipuladas en el Cabezon ó Arrendamiento, é interin duren los contratos actuales, han de recaudar y satisfacer por Cuenta formal y Relacion jurada el legítimo producto de las ventas y enagenaciones que hagan los Eclesiásticos y van declaradas, abonándoles un seis por ciento de lo que efectivamente cobren, al modo que se practicó en fuerza de lo resuelto en Decreto de 29 de Mayo de 64, y otros consiguientes á él sobre la resolution tomada entonces, tambien por punto general, para que sin embargo del anterior en que se declaran libres de Alcabala las segundas y posteriores ventas en los muebles, efectos y mercaderías, la pagasen quando aquellas se hiciesen por Personas esentas y privilegiadas; ó bien que por la propia Contaduría General se encargue por ahora, con el asignado

Fragment of the order from December 17, 1770, Document G206-22.

As 1770 came to a close, the *Visitador* returned to the issue of church administration. This time, he wrote a mandate on the process for sales by members of the church. He provided a detailed procedure, including the creation of formal records with testimonies to their authenticity.

Also in December 1770, Gálvez worked with local accountants and industry members to analyze the production of playing cards over the last five years. A key figure in these calculations was Juan Jose de Echeveste, who held a supervisory position in the industry. They made this comparative table on costs and profits of production. Organized by year, it records amounts of each kind of card produced. Towards the end of the document, the authors note that the total profit sent to the monarchy back in Spain was 189,450 pesos.

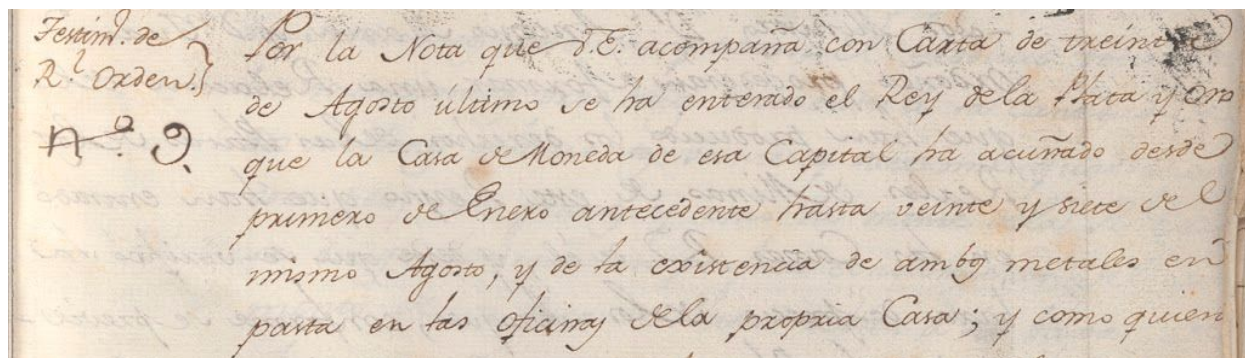


The heading from Document G206-25 described the contents (profits and expenditures) of the table.

Lines of Communication

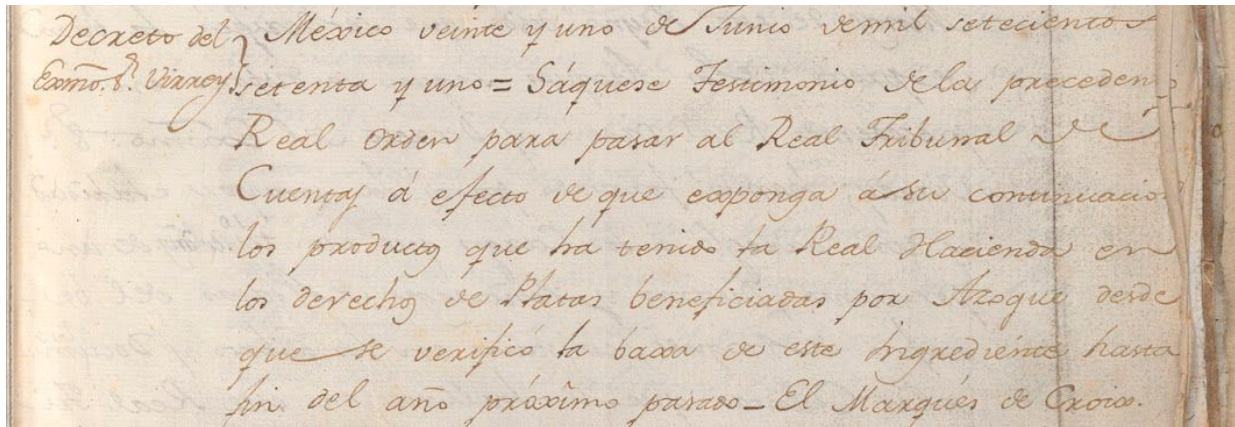
With every reform he introduced, Gálvez faced a significant obstacle: the limits of colonial communication methods. All at once, he was acting on instructions from the monarch, replying with his own suggestions, sending inquiries to community officials, and working with the local authority figures to implement changes. Each correspondence required weeks, if not months, of waiting, as the letters traversed oceans, mountains, and deserts. In order for the *Visitador's* reforms to take effect, he had to work in conjunction with the local bureaucracies. They would need full instructions, as well as the opportunity to submit questions or complaints.

Discussions about the silver and mercury industries in the early 1770s illustrate the complexities of communication during this period. On August 31, the Viceroy sent a letter to the king about the production levels of each substance from January through August of 1770. The monarch finally received it in January of 1771. In response, he ordered the authorities in New Spain to send him a report of the production profits.



A fragment of Document G206-9, with the margin 'Testimonio de Real Orden,' noted that the king received a letter from New Spain--dated August 31, 1770-- about mercury and silver production. After a long journey to Madrid, the letter arrived to the royal court on January 11, 1771.

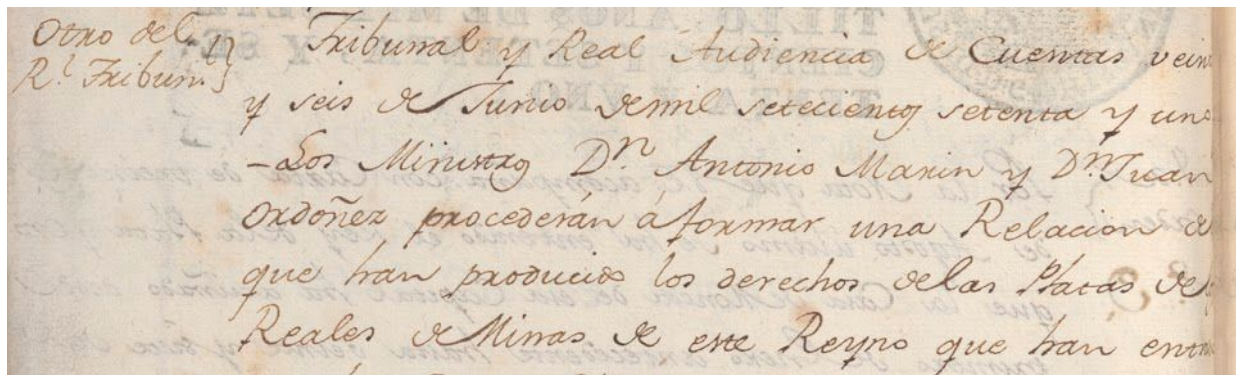
The monarch's response took six months to arrive back to New Spain. In the section featured below, the Viceroy noted a date of receipt of June 21, 1771. In a few days, on June 25th, he ordered his assistants to pass it onto the Tribunal de Cuentas, or the Ministry of Accounting. Its officials would be the ones to create a financial report.



Decreto del Mexico veinte y uno de Junio de mil setecientos
 Exmo. D. Viceroy. Setenta y uno = Sáquese Testimonio de lo preceden
 Real orden para pasar al Real Tribunal de
 Cuentas a efecto de que exponga a su continuacion
 los productos que ha tenido la Real Hacienda en
 los derechos de Platas beneficiadas por Arzoque desde
 que se verificó la baxa de este Inguiente hasta
 fin del año próximo pasado - El Marqués de Croix.

A later section of Document G206-9 states that the monarch's letter arrived to Mexico City in June of 1771.

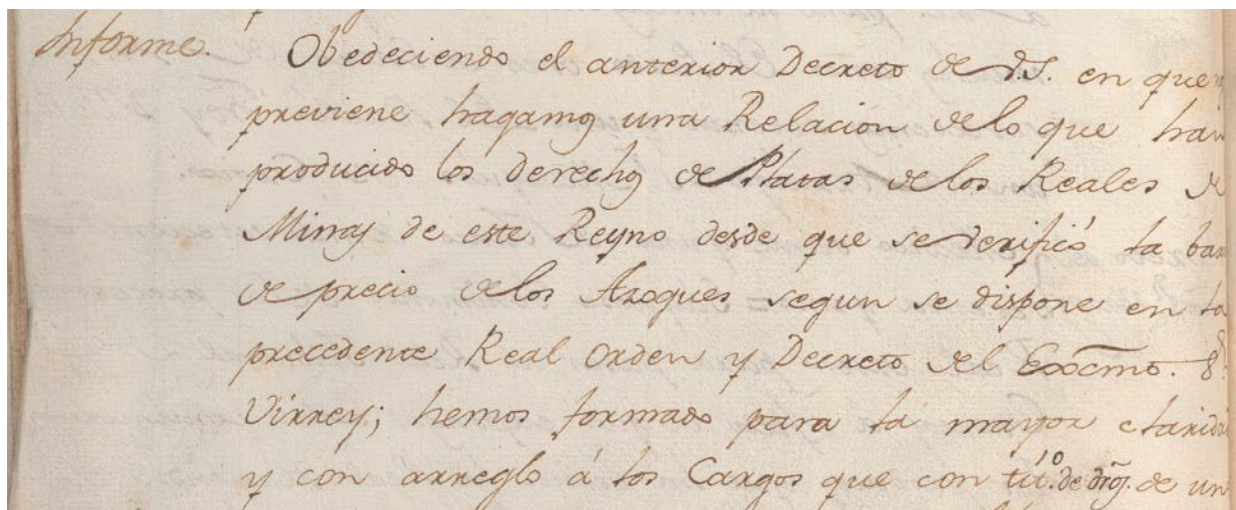
The *Tribunal de Cuentas* was located in the same city as the Viceroy (Mexico City), so the document arrived there the following day, the 26th. On that day, its ministers noted that they would comply with the request to create a financial report.



Otro del Tribunal y Real Audiencia de Cuentas veinti
 y seis de Junio de mil setecientos setenta y uno
 - Los Ministros D. Antonio Marin y D. Juan
 Ochoñez procederán a formar una Relacion de
 que han producido los derechos de las Platas de
 Reales y Minas de este Reyno que han entrado

Later still in Document G206-9, there is a note that The *Tribunal de Cuentas* received the copy of the royal order from the Viceroy on June 26, 1771.

The *Tribunal* ministers finished their report by September 3rd. Antonio del Campo Marín and Juan Ordoñez de Seixas, the two main accountants, signed the document. All of these correspondence records would have been useful resources for Gálvez, as he worked to increase efficiency of mining and other industries of New Spain. Both the time required for cross-Atlantic communication and the number of people involved in these conversations complicated his task. However, it made the cooperation between him and local government agencies essential.



Towards the end of Document G206-9, the accountants of the Royal Treasury of New Spain (Campo and Ordoñez) make note of their compliance with the king's request for a financial report. They finished it in September 1771.

Inter-Agency Cooperation in Industry Inspections

Throughout 1771, Gálvez worked with many local officials to produce financial reports for their respective industries. Before he could make suggestions about how to improve productivity, the *Visitador* needed a clear picture of current conditions. He relied on members of community and government workers to provide him with that information. Sometimes these reports took the form of written descriptions. However, oftentimes, Gálvez and the colonial officials of New Spain utilized a different presentation style: the table.

Utilizing tables helped include a large amount of information--costs, profits, and changes in production levels over time--in one, easy-to-read document. Gálvez was occasionally involved directly in the process of creating the tables. However, because he had so many industries to inspect, Gálvez frequently requested that local managers prepare and send him this data for him to review.

On July 31, 1771, the *Visitador* made one such request to the Treasury Department. Gálvez sent the order to head accountant Santiago Abad, along with "the accountants of his choosing." The letter was brief. They had to create an accurate table that contained the amounts of production and expenditures for the royal treasury in New Spain from the year 1770.

Mexico 11 de Julio de 1771.
n.º 7.
El Real Tribunal de Cuentas dispón
que el Sr. Santiago Abad con los Contadores
que eligiere formen un Estado certificado de
productos y gastos de R.ª Hacienda en el
año proximo pasado de 1770, cotejando exi-
tencias con descubiertos.
Gálvez

Order from Gálvez to the Treasury Department of New Spain requesting financial information from July 31, 1771. See Document G206-7

Members of the *Visitador*'s staff often assisted in the preparation of these informative documents as well. Also in July of 1771, Gálvez's personal accountant Francisco Xavier de Corres created the table featured here. This section is an illustration of income (Productos) versus expenditure (Gastos). It compares the amounts for three periods: 1755-1760, 1760-1766, and 1766-1771. The author demarcated each period by naming it after the Viceroy who ruled New Spain at that time: Agustín de Ahumada y Villalón, the Marquess of Amarillas, for the first; Joaquín de Montserrat, the Marquess of Cruillas, for the second; and Carlos Francisco de Croix, the Marquess of Croix, for the third.

COTEXO									
PRODUCTOS.					GASTOS.				
S. ^{or} de Croix.....	6.831	2195.	2.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	6.636	2669.	5.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	
S. ^{or} Amarillas.....	6.310	2985.	1.	7.....	4.491	2010.	5.	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Exceso.....	520	2210.	0.	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	2.145	2658.	7.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	
S. ^{or} de Croix.....	6.831	2195.	2.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	6.636	2669.	5.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	
S. ^{or} Criallas.....	6.047	2945.	2.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	6.078	2709.	6.	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	
Exceso.....	783	2250.	0.	4.....	557	2939.	6.	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	

to de las Rentas en tiempo del Excmo. S.^{or} Marques de Croix en cada año, al del Excmo. S.^{or} Marq
veinte mil doscientos diez pesos, once granos y quatro quintos; y sus gastos en dos millones ciento qu
y ocho pesos, siete tomines, un grano y quatro quintos; y respecto de los del Excmo. S.^{or} Marq
atos en setecientos ochenta y tres mil doscientos cinquenta pesos, y quatro granos en cada año
ta y siete mil novecientos cincuenta y nueve pesos, seis tomines, seis granos y quatro quini

Otro Cotexo de productos à gastos.

Productos del S. ^{or} Croix.....	34.155	2976.	4.	10.....	34.155	2976.	4.	10	
Gastos del S. ^{or} Amarillas.....	22.455	2053.	5.	9.....	30.393	2349.	0.	8	
	11.700	2922.	7.	1.....	3.762	2427.	4.	2	

Marques de Croix con los Treinta y quatro millones ciento cincuenta y cinco mil

Section of Document G206-8, which provides details on the economic income of various periods.

Gálvez also worked with the mining industry to procure a similar report about mercury production. This table helped identify changes over time in the output of the mines. It tracked production levels between 1765 and 1770. The amount of mercury processed from the mines remained relatively stable, although there was a high point in 1768.

Estado del cizque distribuido por Mayor y Menor á los Mineros y Staviadores de la
 ala Superintendencia y Administracion Gral de R. Atzoquis de Mexico en dos tri
 años de 1765. 1766. y 1767. y el segundo de los de 1768. 1769. 1770. con el de su

años de	Az distrib ^o por menor	Az distribuido en men ^o	Total del ciz. repartido	Su v ^o
1765.	60858 ^q 24 ^{lb} 06 ^g	0	60858 ^q 24 ^{lb} 06 ^g	56703
1766.	70292 ^q 52 ^{lb} 03 ^g	0	70292 ^q 52 ^{lb} 03 ^g	60302
1767.	70004 ^q 33 ^{lb} 12 ^g	0	70004 ^q 33 ^{lb} 12 ^g	57304
Primer trienio	210155 ^q 80 ^{lb} 05 ^g	0	210155 ^q 80 ^{lb} 05 ^g	173000
1768.	90070 ^q 11 ^{lb} 03 ^g	0307 ^q 49 ^{lb} 00 ^g	90377 ^q 93 ^{lb} 03 ^g	60601
1769.	70845 ^q 29 ^{lb} 00 ^g	0388 ^q 79 ^{lb} 02 ^g	80434 ^q 71 ^{lb} 02 ^g	51801
1770.	70762 ^q 26 ^{lb} 12 ^g	0311 ^q 14 ^{lb} 08 ^g	80274 ^q 11 ^{lb} 04 ^g	51001

Document G206-13 provided mercury production information over the years from 1765 through 1770.

Still in the same year (1771), the *Visitador* acquired a table for tobacco production levels. In this document, the goal was to understand the variance between tobacco-growing zones. It demonstrated, for example, that the city of Puebla and its surrounding areas were the highest producing region, while Córdoba was the least productive.

ESTADO DE COTEJO

De los Valores de la Renta del Tabaco de este Reino de Nueva España de los seis meses primero.

	Primer medio año de 1770			Primer medio año de 1771		
	Valor entero	Todo género de gastos	Valor líquido.	Valor entero.	Todo género de gastos	Valor líquido.
Administracion general de México.	2700174. 67.	250250. 47.	244924. 20.	3130727. 40.	260807. 24.	2860920. 26.
Guadalajara.	1530118. 32.	240660. 22.	1280458. 10.	1810228. 48.	200120. 55.	1610107. 73.
Salamanca.	1990161. 20.	210089. 70.	1780071. 30.	2880639. 48.	290989. 24.	2580650. 24.
Veracruz.	590700. 26.	100956. 29.	480743. 79.	670598. 33.	120443. 79.	550154. 36.
Puebla con los agregados de Xalapa, y Teztlantan.	990231. 30.	290572. 66.	690658. 46.	1180071. 77.	340356. 23.	830715. 64.
Orizaba.	280158. 59.	110875. 63.	160282. 76.	260879. 20.	130146. 54.	130732. 41.
San Juan de los Rios.	80769. 51.	100036. 18.	0.	110784. 70.	0.	0.
San Juan de los Rios.	580945. 48.	260537. 20.	320408. 28.	770007. 24.	320331. 11.	380676. 15.
San Juan de los Rios.	105222. 27.	80079. 12.	0.	40114. 35.	80571. 65.	0.
Puebla con los agregados de Tabasco, e Isla del Carmen.	180296. 59.	160138. 70.	120157. 54.	180419. 42.	60140. 36.	120279. 08.
San Juan de los Rios.	60169. 43.	0308. 38.	50861. 07.	40831. 00.	0660. 00.	40171. 00.
Monterrey.	110373. 63.	10058. 56.	100315. 19.	150412. 66.	10602. 75.	130809. 71.
San Juan de los Rios.	50295. 60.	0928. 26.	40367. 36.	40755. 39.	0250. 00.	40505. 39.
Nuevo Santander.	70668. 66.	0866. 28.	60802. 30.	120539. 69.	10366. 39.	110173. 30.
Mazapil.	30447. 16.	0312. 29.	30134. 69.	50015. 67.	0286. 48.	40729. 11.
	937034. 17.	177067. 20.	760186. 19.	1140026. 44.	2100527. 70.	9480655. 30.

The comparative table of tobacco production from Document G-206-4.

Calculating Costs and Profits across the Board

All of this economic information served the fundamental purpose of the *visita*. The reason that the monarch had sent Gálvez to New Spain was to increase the Crown's understanding of political and economic functioning throughout modern-day Mexico. In order to make new rules that would improve their productivity, the Crown--via its representative, the *Visitador*--needed to accumulate data. These tables helped Gálvez to first become familiar with local conditions, and then to issue reforms to increase efficiency.

Since the start of the *visita*, the key to fostering those goals of productivity and efficiency had been Gálvez's wide-spanning efforts. He not only looked into the major industries of precious metal mining or treasury management, but he also investigated local governance and many of the other smaller elements of colonial political and economic rule.

For example, within the span of a year, Gálvez carried out inspections of both *pulque* production and gold and silver mining. *Pulque* was an alcoholic drink native to New Spain. It was popular, and a mainstay of local economies. However, in the hierarchy of concerns for the Crown, it did not approach the level of concern that the monarchs held for precious metals. Nevertheless, the *Visitador* treated both industries with precision, investigating the amounts produced year by year.

Mexico 22. de. Nov. ^{re} de 1770. 104

Los Oficiales Reales de las Casas de esta Capital
me Informarán a continuación, que cantidades se
han enterado en ellas en los tres años anteriores
de mil setecientos sesenta y siete, sesenta y ocho,
y sesenta y nueve por el producto del Estanco y
Ramo de Pulques, con separación de lo cobrado en
esta Real Aduana, y de lo perteneciente a las
Casas de S. Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, y Guadalajara,
como tambien de los arrendamientos y Adminis-
traciones correspondientes a estas Casas matri-
zes.

Gálvez

Section of Document G206-23, dated November 23, 1770. Here, Gálvez described the Treasury Department's report on *pulque* production.

56

Estado

que manifiesta las cantidades de pesos que en Plata y Oro se han labrado en la Real Casa de Moneda de México en los dos Trienios de 1765, á 1767, y 1768, á 1770 la utilidad que ambas labores han producido á la Real Hacienda á saber la de Plata por razon de los 3 reales 22 maravedis en cada marco y la de Oro al respecto de 7 pesos 7 reales 2 maravedis con sus respectivos febles demostrándose tambien el exéso verificado en el segundo de dichos Trienio

Años	Labrado en Oro y Plata	Utilidad de uno y otro	Feble de ambos	Ambas utilidades	Cotexo de ambos trienios	
					Total de lo labrado	Total de sus utilidades
1765.	12.39797892 ²	7180276 ⁴ 29 ³ / ₈	40973 ⁴ 47 ³ / ₈	7230250 ¹ 0 ³ / ₈		
1766	11.7480180 ⁴ 4 ⁰ / ₈	6800080 ⁰ 1 ⁴ / ₈	140081 ² 31 ³ / ₈	6940461 ² 20 ³ / ₈		
1767	11.0540466 ² 2 ⁴ / ₈	6380026 ⁰ 7 ⁰ / ₈ 9 ³ / ₈	400977 ⁰ 16 ⁷ / ₈	6700003 ⁰ 7 ⁰ / ₈ 26 ³ / ₈		
Tales	35.2004436 ⁰ 0 ⁴ / ₈	2.0360683 ² 4 ⁴ / ₈ 6 ⁴ / ₈	600031 ⁰ 7 ⁰ / ₈ 19 ³ / ₈	2.0070015 ⁰ 3 ⁰ / ₈ 25 ³ / ₈	35.2004436 ⁰	2.0070015 ⁰ 2 ⁰ / ₈ 25 ³ / ₈

This image is a section of the table produced for the *Visitador* by the Treasury Department about gold and silver extraction from 1765 through 1767. See Document G206-11

Gálvez also worked with local officials to create a table on the gunpowder industry. As the image below illustrates, these documents prioritized royal profits. Here, towards the bottom of the table, the author designated a row for the amount of profit produced “for Your Majesty” from the most recent calculation, which was almost 200,000 pesos.

...erlos Dos reales, siete granos quintal precio aque vele Satisfiso almino-	90..7..146	
...as reales quintal	14..7..1022	
Suman y se aumentan al Liquido...	<u>25751..3..370</u>	<u>25751..3..370</u>
Asciende el Liquido con dicho aumento a...		<u>261252..1..25478</u>
agregado de ellos y corre Separado de esta Administracion y por Cuenta de la R. Hacienda ...r D. Francisco Mariano Rodriguez secretario enviada al Ilustrissimo Senor		<u>56378..0..1050</u>
Total Liquido para el Cotejo...		<u>618120..2..8478</u>
ochocientos pesos anuales; Corresponden por los quatro años de esta y los dias		<u>472601..6..0</u>
Quedan de utilidad a favor de S. M. sobre lo del ultimo Asiento...		<u>108498..1..5478</u>
...ur Consumos, un millon, ochenta y un mil, novecientos sesenta pesos, cuatro reales un grano de oro		

Fragment of a table on gunpowder production from December 6, 1771. See Document G206-24.

The *correo*, or mail system, was another area that Gálvez looked into. Sending letters and packages incurred costs, and the Crown would have been interested in those expenses. However, royal authorities also had a vested interest in understanding the value of the mailed items themselves. This partial image of Document G206-6 provided a breakdown of the economics of the mailing industry. Once again, the author noted regional differences between parts of New Spain, such as Mexico City and Veracruz.

Número 6^o

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Extracto de los Valores, y gastos, y Producto liquido que han tenido en el año proximo pasado de 1770, las Administraciones principales de la Renta de Correos de Mexico, y Veracruz, y las Estafetas agregadas à ellas en esta Nueva España.

<u>CARGO.</u>	<u>Reales de pl.^a</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Valor entero de las Correspondencias del Reyno.	2672580.	
Yd. de las venidas de Tinguagua.	5240.	
Yd. De las de Europa.	1432947.	
Yd. De las de Yslas.	92914.	
Yd. Derechos de Certificacion, y Francatura del Reyno.	22290.	

Document G206-6, dated December 17, 1771.

As Gálvez finished up his *visita*, he continued collecting and creating more documents similar to the ones featured above. He had been in contact with the king during his seven years as *Visitador*, although the distance made communications slow and irregular. However, the monarch expected Gálvez to end his term by compiling all of the useful information he had learned about New Spain into a summary report. The *visita* officially ended in 1771, and the former *Visitador* returned to Spain soon after. With all of the documents he had acquired over his time in office, he finished his summary report and submitted it to the royal court.

His experience in New Spain had given him a highly valuable perspective into the inner workings of colonial rule. The monarch promoted Gálvez to the position of Secretary of State for the Indies (the Americas). It was one of the top-ranking posts in the royal advisory circle. In that capacity, he was able to apply what he learned in New Spain in order to reform other parts of the Spanish Americas.

Conclusions

Taken together, this selection of documents from the Genaro Garcia Collection provides a unique insight into the day-to-day processes upon which colonial rule relied. In one sense, the *visita* led by Gálvez had comprised many small actions. However, the end result-- the reformed, more efficiently running New Spain--was worth more than the sum of its parts. Gálvez's decisions on the ground in New Spain between 1765 and 1771 had a direct impact on the next two decades. From the time his *visita* ended until his death in 1787, he worked with the king to bring similar changes to other Spanish territories. Every time he issued a new mandate about local governance or commissioned a table about the yearly profits from an industry, he was paving the way for imperial change.

These sources--key for understanding the inspection process-- are rich with information about bureaucratic functions, financial exchanges, and professional relationships. They illuminate both local histories and imperial phenomena. As a result, they are valuable resources for future research into the political, economic, and institutional history of the Spanish Empire.



The inspection brought Gálvez to many parts of modern-day Mexico. The above image identifies all the locations cited in these documents. For an interactive version of this map, follow the link:

<https://brittanyerwin.carto.com/builder/9603f92d-e18f-4316-970a-7f7950f8a66d>

Suggestions for Further Reading

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Stein, Stanley J. and Barbara H. Stein. *Apogee of empire: Spain and New Spain in the age of Charles III, 1759-1789* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).